

MULGA COMMUNITY
Birmingham Industrial District
Off AL-269, eight miles NW of
Ensley at I 20-59
Birmingham vic.
Jefferson County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-74

HAER
ALA
37-BIRMY
13-

PHOTOGRAPHS

XEROGRAPHIC COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
MULGA COMMUNITY
(Mulga Mine & Camp)
Birmingham Industrial District
Off AL-269 at I-20-59
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO
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Location: Off AL 269, 8 miles northwest of Ensley and I20-59, Mulga, Birmingham Vicinity, Jefferson County, Alabama.

Date of
Construction: 1907-1920s

Construction: By 1912, at the time of the Woodward acquisition, the Birmingham Coal and Iron Company had erected most of the camp housing still remaining in the community, including the unusual brick commissary.

Project
Information: This report is based upon written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

DESCRIPTION

To the west of City of Mulga lies the former Birmingham Coal and Iron (later the Woodward Iron) Company mining community of Mulga, now known as Mulga Mine. Square-top houses for whites dating to the early 1900s remain along 5th and 6th Avenues. Many have been substantially remodeled. Slope Avenue leads past the commissary, doctors' offices and foremen's houses along the old Woodward railway to the black camp and eventually to the mine. Many camp houses--square tops and cottages--remain in the black camp. At the mine site, a concrete portal with tracks, the Woodward bathhouse and office building remained in 1980. In 1992, mine buildings visible from the entrance road include a substantial surface plant with metal structures and conveyors.

Mulga Commercial District

Mulga Road between First and Fourth Avenues

Midway between mining camps at Bayview and Mulga, the City of Mulga grew up as a private housing alternative for black and white miners. Adjacent to the tracks of the Woodward (now Birmingham Southern) Railway owned by U.S.X., its standard grid is laid into steeply sloping hills. A commercial district of frame structures extends along the Mulga Road, parallel to the railroad tracks. The community of several hundred people was incorporated in 1947. Minor High School in nearby Minor served as the county school for this area.

Village Falls United Methodist Church (1900s)
303 Mulga Loop Road

Minor High School (1920s)
Mulga Loop Road

John L. Lewis Hall-United Mine Workers of America, District 20,
Local 5986
Mulga Loop Road

Mulga Town Hall and Volunteer Fire Department
Mulga Loop Road

Milton H. Fies Lodge No. 722 F. & A.M.
Mulga Loop Road

Mulga Black Camp (c. 1912)
Azalea Road, Camellia and Rose Lane, Oak, Pine, Hickory, Elm and
Short Streets

Mulga White Camp (c. 1912)
500 Mulga Loop Road and Sixth Avenue

Woodward Office Building, Bathhouse, Mining Headquarters &
Structures
At Mulga mine site, accessible from Oak Boulevard, Black Camp,
Mulga

Birmingham Coal and Iron Company-Woodward Commissary (c. 1912)
Slope Road

Birmingham Coal and Iron Company-Woodward Doctor's Residence and
Office (c. 1912)
Slope Road, across from commissary

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Birmingham Coal and Iron Company, a locally owned mining and furnace company formed from the Tutwiler Coal, Coke and Iron Company by Morris Adler and his brother Edgar Adler, opened the Mulga mine about 1907. Louis Bryant, a Kentucky geologist with European training, conducted a study of area coal fields for the Adlers and determined that the thickest part of the Pratt seam was at Mulga. By 1910, Mulga mine employed 230 persons and provided coal to area railroads and the company's Vanderbilt furnaces at East Birmingham. In 1912, the Woodward Iron Company acquired the Mulga mine through purchase of Birmingham Coal and Iron. During the 1910s and 1920s, the mine produced 200-300,000 tons, a sizeable

tonnage for the period, and employed 300-400 persons. The mine remained a substantial and steady producer through the 1950s and was actively mined in the 1960s. Mulga Mine Company, a Mead Corporation subsidiary, employed 529 at its operation there in 1980. In 1990, this company no longer in exists and Mulga mine is not operating.

Sources Consulted

White, Marjorie, The Birmingham District, pp. 261-262

Site Visit, 3/1/92